1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

rarest of instances, and only by fixed legal procedure, since mere verbal denial of family rights cannot deprive a person of his inheritance.

Within the immediate family it is the duty of the man to procure food for his wife and children. When his fields have been harvested, the produce is taken to the house and given to the wife, who retains a portion of it for the needs of the household and sells the surplus at the market, using the money to buy clothing and other necessaries for her husband, her children, and herself. A part of the sum she receives may be used to purchase animals to be used for transport, food, or breeding-purposes; and whatever money is left over is saved, particularly if a desirable plot of ground is available, or a mass and ceremony for the ancestors or promised rituals for the gods are in prospect. The woman, who is held to be more thrifty than the man, is thus the banker of the family. Her opinion is prized by her husband, and though a man has the legal right to dispose of a horse or a cow or his own land as he desires, in most households nothing would be done until the wife was consulted. It is true that quarrels often arise concerning family funds held by the wife, especially when a man questions the accounting given him, or on occasion when he wants money to bet on a cock-fight or for drinking or other personal needs whose cost he does not care to have reviewed. But for many men the problem is quite well solved by the expedient of deducting a sum from his earnings without telling his wife that she has not been given the full amount.

It is only in relatively small matters that the membership of a household acts as a self-determining unit. In affairs of greater moment the extended family must figure, for despite the informality of its organization — at least as manifested in Mirebalais — and its lack of legal sanction, its power, especially as lodged in the old folk, is none the less real. It is because of this that it is said: "The peasant consults his elders about everything he does." When a transaction of some im-